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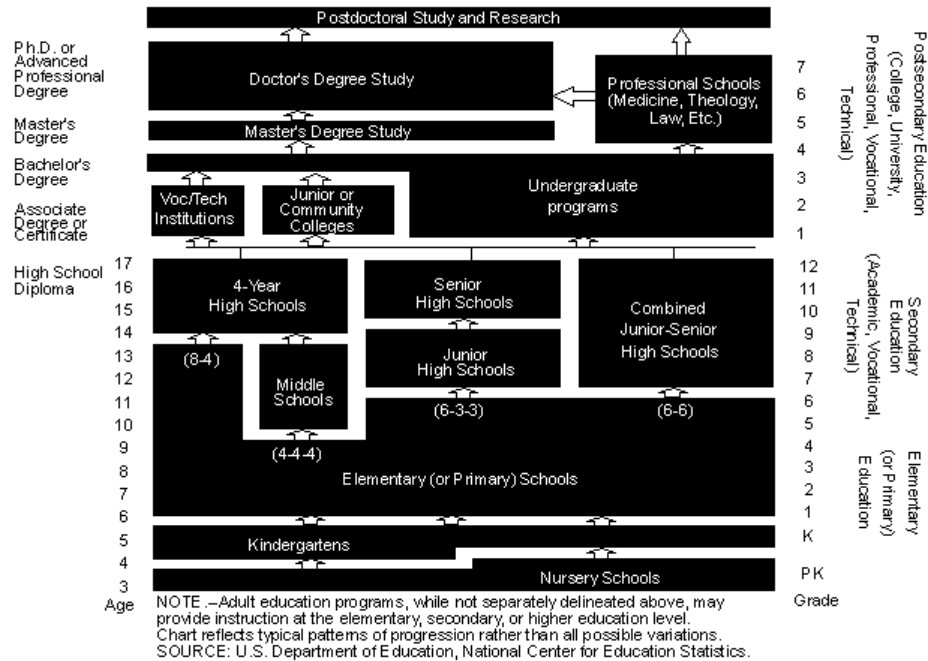
In German:

<http://www.usembassy.de/exchanges/studyd.htm>

In English:

<http://www.usembassy.de/exchanges/study.htm>

THE AMERICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM



The American education system is comprised of three main levels: elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education.

Elementary education consists of one year of kindergarten (beginning at age 5) and five years of primary education (grades first through fifth).

Secondary education lasts seven years and encompasses grades six through twelve. Most commonly, students attend a separate school for grades nine through twelve known as a "high school". Upon completion of high school, the students are awarded a high school "diploma". This credential is a prerequisite for admission to a college or university.

Post-secondary education includes the higher education degree system (undergraduate and graduate degrees) as well as adult and continuing education, leisure, vocational and technical programs.

Higher Education

Higher education is offered by colleges, universities, professional schools, teacher's colleges, community and junior colleges, vocational and technical schools, academies of art and music.

The term "college" is often used where undergraduate study is concerned. The college may be part of a university which also has graduate and professional schools, or it may be an independent institution offering a Bachelor's degree program, with little if any instruction at the graduate level. (Thus Harvard College is the undergraduate division of Harvard University; Vassar College, Amherst College and Sarah Lawrence College are examples of independent colleges, also called liberal arts colleges). The academic status of an independent liberal arts college may be just as high as of a college which is part of a university.

Four years of undergraduate study lead to a Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts or in Science, a B.A. or B.S. degree, and qualify the graduate to apply for admission to a graduate school.

Degrees

The Bachelor's degree: The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree is awarded on successful completion of a specified number of courses or units and the full degree requirement is usually stated as being 120 credits (about 40 courses) for institutions operating on a semester system, and 180 credits for a quarterly calendar. A Bachelor's degree program is designed to last four years, the first year being called Freshman year, the second Sophomore, the third Junior, and the fourth Senior. Courses in the first two years are referred to as "lower division" courses and in the last two years as "upper division" courses. Many institutions have experimented with a wide variety of amendments to the structure of their degrees in recent years. Nevertheless, the original pattern usually survives in some form and consists of:

1. General basic courses sometimes called "core courses" or "distribution requirements," which must be taken by all students, usually during their first two years. These comprise about a third of the degree and they include subjects such as English, a foreign language, a natural science, social science and mathematics.
2. Courses in which a student wishes to "major," i.e. specialize, which are mostly taken in the last two years and usually amount to a quarter or more of total degree requirements.
3. "Elective courses" which the student chooses from any field.

Students may sometimes complete a Bachelor's degree in less than four years by (a) receiving credits for pre-college work (i.e. the European Baccalaureat) or (b) the "Abitur" or (c) taking courses during the summer.

The Master's degree: The system described above is generally applicable. Although requirements for advanced degrees vary far more than those for the Bachelor's degree, some number of course credits is always required. The Master's degree will usually require a minimum of about 30 credits up to a maximum of 36 credits, and a "B" grade average (on a scale of A, B, C, D and F).

The Doctorate degree: covers many fields of specialization and requires a minimum of three to four years of study beyond the Bachelor's degree; two to four years after the Master's degree. Doctorates in Education, Science and Law are sometimes labeled Ed.D., Sc.D., Jur.D., but most doctorates are known as Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees.

To obtain a Ph.D. degree or other doctorate the university generally requires that a student:

1. Earn a certain number of credits in a required distribution of courses.
2. Maintain an average grade of B.
3. Pass a qualifying comprehensive examination after completion of the required courses.
4. Pass examinations in one or more foreign languages.
5. Present and defend a thesis which is the result of original research.
6. Pass an oral examination.

For detailed information about American degrees, consult individual university catalogs or subject reference books in the DAI Library.

Additional Features

The credit system: American degrees, both undergraduate and graduate, are earned on the basis of the number of courses successfully taken. Each course earns "credits" or "units", which are known as credit hours, semester hours (for schools on the semester system), quarter hours (for schools on the quarter system) or merely hours or credits. The number of credits earned by each course relates to the number of hours of classroom work involved, but does not necessarily correspond exactly. For instance, a course meeting three times a week for an hour (actually 50 minutes) each time may be expected to give a student three hours credit for the semester or term. On the other hand, an intensive seminar may meet once a week for two hours and also be a three-credit course. Two or three laboratory periods are usually considered to be equivalent to one class hour. The undergraduate student program, known as an "academic load," is normally 15-17 units a semester, or 12 to 15 units a quarter. The graduate student's normal load is 9 -12 units.

Academic calendar: The Academic year (which varies for each institution) normally runs from early or mid-September to late May or early June, and optional summer courses are usually available outside the academic year. The academic year is either divided in two terms called "semesters" or into three terms called "quarters," in which case the fourth quarter is an optional summer term.

Accreditation: If one decides to study in the United States, one should always choose an institution which is "accredited". An institution is accredited provided that its program of study, professors, and academic facilities meet the minimum standards established by 6 regional agencies recognized by the *National Council on Accrediting* and by the *U.S. Office of Education*. Accreditation by a regional agency, such as the *Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools* or the *New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools*, applies to the institution as a whole and may be awarded for up to four different levels: Associate degree; Bachelor's degree; Master's degree and Doctorate. Accreditation by a professional agency applies only to the relevant school or department; e.g., engineering schools are accredited by the *Engineering Council for Professional Development*. Foreign students should not enroll in degree courses in institutions or departments which are not accredited. To verify accreditation consult *Accredited Institutions of Post-Secondary Education* at the DAI Library.

Additional Resources

Detailed information concerning education in the United States may be found at the DAI Library including catalogs of numerous colleges and universities in the United States, and other relevant reference books.

The *If You Want to Study in the United States* series is available for purchase or for reference use in the DAI Library (<http://educationusa.state.gov>) and includes:

- Booklet One: *Undergraduate Study*
- Booklet Two: *Graduate Study*
- Booklet Three: *Short-Term Study, English Language Programs, Distance Education and Accreditation*
- Booklet Four: *Getting Ready to Go: Practical Information for Living and Studying in the United States*

Adapted from "Continuing Your Education in the United States", Commission for Educational Exchange, Brussels.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDY IN THE US

Qualifications: What you need to be admitted

If you are thinking about pursuing an undergraduate degree at a US institution, one of the first considerations you need to make is whether or not you have the minimum entry qualifications. German educated students are expected to have completed the *Gymnasium* and received the *Abitur*. Because this represents instruction beyond the typical American high school, institutions may give university credit for some subjects, though the amounts will vary. Check with each institution to see how they are accepted for admissions purposes.

Choosing a US Degree Program

13-18 months before beginning your study

If you have the basic qualifications to be accepted at a US institution, you should consider whether a US degree is right for you.

Curriculum: US undergraduate degrees pursue a Liberal Arts Philosophy, where students take a variety of courses in the arts and sciences before concentrating in one academic area.

Associate's Degrees: There are two different types of Associate's Degrees. The College Transfer Associate's Degree is a two-year degree designed to meet the requirements of the first two years of a Bachelor's Degree. The Terminal Associate's Degree is a two-year degree designed to provide a vocational qualification.

Bachelor's Degrees:

These consist of:

1. general education courses in a range of subjects;
2. a major, which is the concentrated field of study ;
3. electives, which are non-required classes a student chooses to take.

Bachelor's degrees are usually completed in 4 years; however, there is no fixed time scale. Instead, a specified number of credits, units or semester hours are required, and the degree is awarded upon their completion. Each class (course) taken is given a credit value. Continuous assessment is a prominent feature and each class is graded, with that grade then converted into a numeric equivalent on a scale of 0 - 4.0 or 0 - 5.0. Each score is

averaged to create a Grade Point Average (GPA), which is used as an indicator of performance.

In the US, the terms 'college' and 'university' are synonymous and refer to institutions that award undergraduate degrees.

Choosing an Institution

13-18 months before beginning your study

Below are some criteria you may want to consider when choosing the right institution for your academic and personal goals.

Cost: International students must prove they have sufficient funding to cover all costs for at least the first year of study in order to receive a student visa. Tuition can range from \$1,500 - \$35,000 per academic year (nine months), not including books. Living expenses vary and are likely to be at their highest in big cities, ranging from \$4,000 - \$14,000 per year. You will also need to cover transportation between the US and your home country and health insurance.

Financial Aid: A student's family is usually the primary contributor to the cost of education, although some colleges offer aid for international students. However, scholarships that cover total expenses are very rare. Funding is usually based on academic merit, though some colleges may give funding based on need. Some institutions also offer sports scholarships or performing arts scholarships. Funding from independent funding bodies is less common, and usually requires time and dedication to sift through listings in directories and on the Internet.

Please see the DAI pamphlet "Financial Aid: Undergraduate Study" for more information.

Important Details:

- Check that any university you are considering is **regionally accredited**; otherwise you may have difficulty having the degree recognized by other universities and employers.
- The **admission difficulty** of institutions varies greatly in the US. Most institutions look at more than academic performance when making admissions decisions; therefore, not even perfect grades will guarantee a place at your first choice university. We recommend that you apply to a range of institutions to ensure yourself a place.
- Your **field of study** or "major" will obviously be a consideration in your choice of institution. For visa purposes it is recommended that students declare a major. However, because of the Liberal Arts curriculum it is quite flexible to change your major once you have been admitted.

- The **environment** varies greatly from college to college. Location: large city or small town, East Coast or Midwest, and weather will also have an impact. Enrolment at institutions ranges from 200 to 50,000 students, which will offer different opportunities and academic climates for students.
- **Campus life** also will have an impact on the personality of a college. Consider extracurricular activities such as sports teams, academic clubs, university newspapers, theatre productions, etc. Some universities, while accepting students of any race, creed or color, were established with specific missions, such as religious affiliations, women-only campuses, or a particular ethnic majority on campus.

Admissions Tests

12 months before beginning your study

You will need to prepare for and take any required admissions tests. The universities' application materials and websites or various university directories will indicate the standardized tests that are required. Most students will be required to sit the SAT I or the ACT. If your home country does not have English as its only official language, you will also need to take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) to prove your competency.

The DAI Library distributes the official bulletins that provide registration details and content information for these tests.

Applications

9-12 months before beginning your study

Once you have selected the colleges, you are ready to begin the application process. Each institution has its own application, deadlines and procedures, so you should contact each one directly for forms. Many institutions offer online applications, but it is usually still necessary to send some information by post. Deadlines may be as early as November or as late as May or June, but most fall between January and March.

US applications will usually require some or all of the following:

- The completed application form;
- School transcripts;
- Proof of funding;
- SAT/ACT and TOEFL scores, which must be sent directly from the test administrators to the universities;
- Essays or personal statements;
- Letters of recommendation;
- Application fee.

The key to submitting a competitive application is to allow plenty of time to complete all the steps of the process, especially concentrating on essays and personal statements.

Acceptances and Rejections

2-4 months before beginning your study

Once you have decided which institution you will attend, notify them of your decision and return any official documents. Also send letters of regret to any institutions you reject.

Visas

2-4 months before beginning your study

Most international students enter the US on a non-immigrant student visa. Once you accept an offer, your university will require proof of funds for the first year before sending you either an I-20 or a DS-2019 government document. You can then apply for your visa - either an F-1 or a J-1, respectively. All applicants for a student or exchange visitor visa are required to complete the visa application form DS-156 and DS-158. If a member of your family travels with you, separate forms must be filled out for each family member. Additionally, males aged between 16-45 must also complete a DS-157 form.

For more visa details call (Euro 1,86/Min.):

0190-850055 – Live service (Montag-Freitag 07:00-20:00)

0190-85005800 – Bandansage (24 Std.)

0190-850058-01 – Fax-Abruf (24 Std.)

Information is also available on the US Embassy website:

www.usembassy.de/visa.

Additional Resources

This Guide is a basic introduction to the university admissions process. We strongly recommend you also read the more detailed guide, *Booklet One: Undergraduate Study* from the *If You Want to Study in the United States* series (<http://educationusa.state.gov/undergrad/pubs.htm>), which is also available for purchase or for reference use in the DAI Library.

Adapted from "Undergraduate Guide to Studying in the US", US Educational Advisory Service, London <<http://www.fulbright.co.uk/eas/studyus/undergraduate/index.html>>.

GRADUATE STUDY IN THE US

Are US Graduate Courses Right for You?

18 months before beginning your study

You need to consider all your options, take into account what you want to gain from graduate education, and what studying in the US will do for you. There are several different types of graduate degree classifications in the US:

Degree Level

Academic Master's degrees are generally completed in two academic years, and often include a thesis option.

Professional Master's degrees are designed to lead you from your first degree to a particular profession (e.g. business administration, journalism, and social work). They usually require 36-48 credits and are unlikely to include a thesis option.

Doctoral degrees require at least 3 years beyond the bachelor's, but are rarely completed in less than 5 or 6 years as most students take on teaching or research assignments during their studies. Students are required to complete 2 years of coursework culminating in oral and written qualifying exams (preliminary exams) before being admitted to doctoral candidacy and embarking on dissertation research. A dissertation (300-400 typed pages) of publishable quality work is then required, followed by an oral exam or 'defense' to complete the degree.

Non-Degree Opportunities:

Special Student Status/Non-Degree Status is given to students who want to take graduate courses for a term or year, but do not wish to enroll for a degree. Students are treated like first-year graduate students and will receive credits for their coursework, but no degree.

Visiting Fellow Status is given to advanced doctoral candidates who have completed all coursework and who wish to pursue dissertation research at a US university, or for scholars who have a doctorate and would like to pursue further research in their field.

Degree Subject

Academic subjects usually require a relevant first degree, but universities

may consider applicants with non-relevant degrees. If exceptions are made you may be asked to complete some key undergraduate courses in the subject first before being admitted into the graduate course.

Professional subjects such as business (MBA), education or engineering usually do not require a relevant first degree but ask for relevant work experience.

Recognition of Degree Back Home

Accreditation is the system that ensures university standards in the US.

Regional accreditation is the type of university accreditation recognized by all employers and universities in the US. Departments can also be accredited. Although the evaluation of a US degree is subjective and ultimately left to an employer or university, we understand that many German educational institutions and professional bodies may not consider graduates of a US institution that is not regionally accredited.

Professional qualifications gained in the US may not transfer over to Germany, so students are advised to contact the relevant German professional association to find out which US qualifications will be recognized.

Eligibility

Students from Germany should hold a degree equivalent to the U.S. bachelor's degree. While some institutions will accept two documented semesters of coursework beyond the *Vordiplom* or *Zwischenprüfung* for U.S. bachelor's degree equivalency, others require a *University-Diplom* or *Magister Artium* (eight semesters), *Diplom-* (FH) *Fachhochschule* (eight semesters), or *Staatsexamen*. Check with each institution to see how they are accepted for admissions purposes.

A **minimum Grade Point Average** (GPA) may be one of the eligibility criteria. In the US, many institutions require at least a "B" average on all coursework taken (on a scale of A, B, C, D and F). This is generally equivalent to a 2.0 in the German system (on a scale of 1-6).

Choose Your Courses

13-15 months before beginning your study

Application Strategy

We advise applying to three to six universities, as applying to one or two can be risky if you are rejected or no funding is available, while applying to too many institutions will increase your workload. Some people prefer to apply to only the most competitive universities, while others prefer to apply to a mix of competitive schools and those with larger intakes for a greater chance of acceptance.

Identify Courses in your Subject Area

- Use web-based search sites
- Use general and subject-specific directories available at the DAI Library and some university careers services.
- Talk to your German tutors and lecturers and enquire about their US contacts.
- Read journals and books to identify key scholars and institutions in your field.
- Contact university departments to discuss courses and funding.

Admission Difficulty

Be realistic about your chances of admission. Most departments can tell you the percentage of successful applicants (figures also available in the *Peterson's Guide to Graduate Programs*). Also look at any minimum test score criteria and discuss any concerns you have about your academic background with the department.

Costs

Each university sets its own tuition fees. Tuition for one academic year (nine months) at state universities ranges from around \$4,000-\$13,000, and for private universities from around \$8,000-\$35,000. Living costs vary tremendously. They can range between \$7,000 and \$20,000 per academic year. However, do not necessarily eliminate costly courses as they may offer financial aid to offset these costs.

Financial Aid

In 2001-2002, US universities were the primary funding source for 37.9% of graduate international students, 51.5% of students used personal/family resources and 10.6% were funded by other sources (IIE Open Doors 2002).

University financial aid may be available through:

- Scholarships or fellowships – can cover tuition and fees, living costs.
- Teaching/research assistantships – can cover the above costs, and you are required to work within the department for up to 20 hours per week.
- Loans – may require a US citizen to co-sign the loan.

Confirm with universities that funding is available to international students. Some universities will only give funding after the first term or year of study.

Note that financial aid deadlines can be earlier than the university application deadlines.

Non-university awards may be available from bi-national exchange programs, foundations, corporations, governments, or individuals. Awards may

be categorized by eligibility criteria like nationality, subject area, gender, degree level, intended university or state. Such awards are competitive and may cover full costs, but are more likely to only cover partial costs. **Deadlines tend to be earlier than university application deadlines.**

Other Considerations

In choosing where you will be living for the next one to six years of your life, some other factors to consider are:

- Location: climate varies enormously, as do urban and rural settings.
- University Size: enrolment size can vary from 200 - 50,000 students, with some universities resembling small cities.
- Number of International Students: would you like to be part of a large international community?

Compile Your Funding Application Packs

12 months before beginning your study

The most common source of funding for postgraduate study is the department in which you plan to study. If you have not already done so, contact them and ask what financial aid options are available for international students. Then research non-university funding. Most financial aid applications will consist of the following:

- **Application forms:** check on-line or write to the funding bodies for information and application forms.
- **References:** you usually will need to provide 2 or 3 references from people that know you and your work well.
- **Statement of purpose:** you usually need to write a personal statement explaining why you are applying for the award and why the funding body should accept you.
- **Standardized tests:** some funding applications will also require standardized test scores.

Take the Standardized Test(s)

10-12 months before beginning your study

If your prospective US university requires standardized test scores, you can collect test registration forms and information from the DAI Library. Now is the time to register for any of the following tests:

- GRE (Graduate Record Exam): generally required for applicants to humanities, arts & sciences courses. There are two types of test: the General Test, and Subject Tests. Find out which are required.
- GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test): generally required for applicants to management courses.
- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language): generally required for applicants who have not studied at an English-speaking university.

Ensure that your scores reach the universities before their application deadlines. Allow a minimum of four weeks from the test date for the scores to reach your chosen institution(s).

Compile your University Application Packs ***10-12 months before beginning your study***

Each component is equally important, however, you can counter a weak component (e.g. low degree classification) with a stronger component (e.g. excellent standardized test scores and references).

Application form

Email, write to, fax or phone the US university's Director of Graduate Admissions for prospectuses, application forms and financial aid information. You may have to pay for prospectuses. Forms and information may also be online. Also contact the department for information on courses and faculty. Give your name, address, nationality, qualifications obtained, proposed degree subject and ideal start date.

Transcripts

A transcript is an official record of your undergraduate classes (and graduate classes), exam marks and grades on coursework. You will need an original transcript, on letter-headed paper and signed by your university's registrar, for each US university or funding body application. US universities will often ask for these transcripts to be provided in sealed envelopes, with a stamp and signature across the seal. A key to the grading system should be included.

References

The university or funding body may also request that your references are provided in sealed envelopes with the referee's signature across the seal.

Non-refundable application fee

These range from \$30 to \$100 per school and payment is often required in US\$. You may have to pay your bank a small fee to write you a check in US\$.

Funding Application Deadlines

5-10 months before beginning your study

Please ensure you check funding deadlines carefully with the institutions you are applying to.

University Application Deadlines

4-8 months before beginning your study

Missed Deadlines

US university deadlines are firm and you need to ensure that the full application pack has reached the university before the required date. Some universities will allow students to start in January instead of August. Consult

the prospectus for the January application deadline. Many financial aid packages are distributed in August so there may be less chance of aid for January students.

Rolling admissions

Some courses, particularly MBA programs have rolling admissions, which means that applications will be accepted until spaces are full. Early application is still advisable. A priority date for admissions indicates that priority will be given to those submitting applications by that date, but later applications will be considered if space is available.

Acceptances and Rejections

2-4 months before beginning your study

Decide which university to attend, notify them and return official forms.

Visas

Most international students enter the US on a non-immigrant student visa. Once you accept an offer from a US university, the university will require proof of funds for the first year before sending you either an I-20 or a DS-2019 government document. You can then apply for your visa - either an F-1 or a J-1, respectively. All applicants for a student or exchange visitor visa are required to complete the visa application forms DS-156, and DS-158. If a member of your family travels with you, separate forms must be filled out for each family member. All males aged between 16 and 45 have to complete the additional DS-157 form.

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Adapted from "Postgraduate Guide to Studying in the US", US Educational Advisory Service, London <<http://www.fulbright.co.uk/eas/studyus/postgraduate/index.html>>.

HOW TO WRITE PERSONAL STATEMENTS AND APPLICATION ESSAYS

Basic Format for Essay

Introduction and thesis statement (Say what you want to do)

Before writing an essay you must have a thesis statement. This is one sentence announcing the central idea of the paper. It must be specific. This statement should sum up the basic meaning of the essay and signal to the reader what to expect.

- The first sentence is the most important one because it gets the reader's attention.
- The first paragraph (introduction) is very important. It should "hook" the reader, i.e. make him or her want to continue reading.

The body of the paper (Do it)

Each paragraph should deal with one central idea. This idea is introduced early in a topic sentence, telling the reader what to expect in the paragraph. Several ideas in one paragraph will only confuse the reader. If the central idea has several supporting points, break it into several paragraphs rather than having one very long paragraph.

It is not enough to simply state ideas, you must support them. By giving evidence, you convince readers of the truth and accuracy of your ideas. If you successfully prove your statements, the reader should agree with your conclusion.

As a writer, you must structure the sequence of ideas carefully and logically. You are mapping a course, leading the reader through the points that support your thesis. You do not want to confuse the reader. Transitions between paragraphs link them together logically. These "connecting sentences" keep the paper flowing smoothly.

Conclusion (Say what you have done)

Restates the thesis and main points supporting it. In the conclusion, the writer should give some new ideas or information to challenge the reader to think further.

Writing the Statement of Purpose

"Graduate schools and competitive undergraduate programs want students who are able to think clearly, without confusion. The statement of purpose will

demonstrate, fortunately or unfortunately, whether you possess that quality. When one reads a proposal that is poorly organized, filled with EXTRANEIOUS details, and foggily focused, one gets the immediate impression that the mind that produced such confusion can never be disciplined enough to regard facts objectively and present them logically." (Leedy, Paul D., Practical Research Planning and Design, MacMillan Publishing, Co., New York, 1993.)

Step One: Know Yourself

With the statement of purpose you can persuade the admissions committee to accept you. In order to convince them, you must be convinced yourself. You must be sure of what you want, why you want it, and why that particular program can help you. Why should the school select you over someone else? YOU MUST KNOW YOURSELF. Know your strengths and weaknesses. Before beginning to write, think. Review your intellectual and personal development over your academic career. When you can clearly articulate the history that led you to decide to apply to a particular American program, you are ready to begin writing.

Step Two: An Outline

This does not need to be written in complete sentences. The outline below is just an example. The points you want to discuss can be in a different order, as long as you have an introduction, body, and conclusion. You need to decide what order of ideas is the best for your essay. You want the strongest and most logical essay that you can write.

Introduction / Your goals

Body of the Paper

- Explain background (Prove that you are academically prepared for this study program)
 - Where and what studied
 - Past research/diploma project
 - If applying to a program in a different field of study, explain how skills learned in earning your degree can be applied to the new field.
- Description of professional goals
 - Why that field of study interesting/what influenced you to choose that field
 - Any related experience/research after university
 - Future plans after receiving degree
- What study in graduate school
 - What your specific interests are in your field
 - Why this program is needed for your professional development

- Why U.S.? Why that particular university - courses, faculty, research projects/facilities?

Conclusion

- Summing up the main points
- What you can contribute to the program

Step Three: Writing the Statement

If you have done a good job with steps one and two, the writing should come easily. Keep the following points in mind:

1. The first sentence is the most important one. You want the reader's attention.
2. Cut out any sentences that are not absolutely necessary. Every sentence should be important and clearly stated. Most points can be made without a lot of necessary background.
3. Be self-confident. Frame everything positively. Use phrases such as "actively participated in" rather than "although I was only an assistant". Even if your English is horrible, do NOT tell them. Your TOEFL scores will indicate your English ability. **Do not write any negative statements.**
4. They are looking to see if your background and expectations match with what they offer. The more specific you can be with each institution you are applying to, the more convincing you will be.

If written correctly, the statement of purpose should show that you are goal-oriented, that you can identify what you want, and that you have taken steps to obtain those goals.

Different Programs

The emphasis in your statement of purpose depends on where you are applying.

Undergraduate Program

Put emphasis on you as a whole person, not just academic ability. They are looking for a well-rounded person who will adapt well into the school's social as well as academic community. Be sure to mention sports, volunteer activities, dance or music lessons, hobbies, etc.

Graduate School

The emphasis here is on scholarship and your research interests. While you want to come through as a person, you want to focus on those aspects of your personality that relate to your intellectual and academic interests and goals.

Grants, Fellowships, and Scholarships

What you include in your essay should depend on the purpose of the scholarship. Whom does the organization want to support?

- If it is a women's organization, emphasize how your goals relate to you as a woman.
- If it is a scientific organization, explain your scientific achievements and future goals.
- If the fellowship is for a business program, your work experience in the business world will be more important than your university coursework.

Internships

Emphasize practical work experience. You want to include your academic accomplishments, but this is secondary. It does not have to be paid work; organizations, committee work, and classroom projects at the university are also important. Demonstrate how that internship will help further your professional goals.

Highlight the qualities that make you right for that job. If the job involves sales, you want to stress your ability to get along with people. If the job involves research, emphasize your powers of concentration and persistence.

Final Comments

Be honest. Be confident and positive without being pushy or demanding.

Do not be discouraged if you are not accepted. Be constructive and analyze the possible reasons for your rejection. Could your statement of purpose have been stronger? Are your academic qualifications strong enough for that program? Maybe it really is not the right program for your goals.

Another saying is, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again". If you really want to study in the U.S., look into other programs. If you were rejected from a school that you feel is really the best for you, improve your weak points, work on new projects that show you are serious about your goals, and reapply.

Additional Resources

The essays listed below were written by US faculty giving advice on writing US graduate school admissions essays. They give an overview of what US faculty are looking for in the essays as well as do's and don'ts on content and style.

- "Applying to Graduate Schools in the United States: The Statement of Purpose": <http://www.fulbright.co.uk/eas/studyus/postgraduate/statement1.html>
- "How to Write a Successful Statement of Purpose for Graduate Schools": <http://www.fulbright.co.uk/eas/studyus/postgraduate/statement2.html>

Adapted from "Statement of Purpose", US Education Information Center, Moscow <<http://www.useic.ru/study/apply/statement.htm>>.

FINANCIAL AID: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

In searching for financial aid as an undergraduate, consider that the chances of gaining financial assistance are much better at the graduate level.

Exchanges

Many students who go to the United States to study as undergraduates do so as exchange students, usually for a single academic year or less. These exchanges are usually arranged between institutions for groups of students and it is difficult for individual students to arrange an exchange experience.

Aid from US Colleges and Universities

Most of the limited financial aid for undergraduates from US sources comes from colleges and universities themselves. In some cases students from abroad compete with American students for limited financial aid. The following types of financial aid are available at American colleges:

Merit-based scholarship is based on academic qualifications irrespective of need. The student has no work or repayment obligations.

Need-based scholarship is based on financial need but usually in conjunction with academic achievement. The student has no work or repayment obligations.

Athletic scholarship is generally based on the athletic ability of the applicant but is not completely irrespective of academic performance.

Part-time campus employment allows the student is to earn money by working on campus for a certain number of hours per week. Some schools require all students to take on-campus jobs, thereby reducing the overall cost of education at that university.

Cooperative programs allow students to alternate periods of full-time study with full-time work. When a period of employment is required for the degree, foreign students (except M-1 visa holders) can work legally to defray part of their expenses by participating in such a program. The work generally begins at the end of the sophomore year and adds one year to a 4-year degree. Cooperative programs that incorporate several short periods of employment alternating with periods of study usually do not admit foreign students; look for

programs with one or two extended periods of employment. Whether or not cooperative work assignments actually pay a significant part of study cost varies from program to program.

University loans - Students receive loans which are expected to be repaid after graduation. Foreign students are not usually eligible for loans.

Advances standing - If a student qualifies, s/he can apply for advanced placement at the institutions s/he wants to study at. This does not constitute financial aid in the true sense of the word but is a means of cutting down on costs of the program by reducing its duration (i.e.: a student needs to make up fewer credits to graduate).

Part-time employment on campus - After the first year of study, sometimes the International Student Office can help foreign students find jobs on campus consisting of up to 20 hours per week. The position must not displace a US citizen or permanent resident. These jobs, however, do not pay high wages.

Who Should Apply?

Students who have a greater chance of obtaining financial assistance usually:

- Show evidence of high academic achievement;
- Have high standardized test scores (SAT, TOEFL);
- Demonstrate financial need, but have enough private funding to at least cover part of the cost. Only the most exceptional students could expect to get full financial support;
- Have a unique talent or skill, or a record of meaningful involvement in extracurricular activities;
- Obtain individualized letters of recommendation enumerating the student's abilities;

Applying as a transfer student to finish your last 1 or 2 years may increase your chances for support. An institution is more likely to pay for 2 years of study than 4 years of study.

QUESTIONS to locate colleges and universities that may be able to give you at least partial financial support:

1. **Are you an exceptionally good student?** If you can document an excellent academic record and class ranking in your secondary school work, if you have a TOEFL score of above 600 in paper version or 250 in computer-based version and have a high SAT score, you may be able to qualify for admission to a college or university with very high admissions standards, that will offer funding to students who meet their admission requirements but are unable to pay the total cost of their education. If you think you can qualify for admission to one of

these universities, read about applying for admission to highly competitive colleges in books at the DAI Library. The technique may require some special tactics to make your application stand out from all the other excellent students who apply. These are the institutions most likely to be able to stretch their financial aid programs to provide more than just partial support.

2. **Are you an exceptionally good athlete, or do you excel at other special skills?** To take advantage of this strategy, you first need to know which universities or colleges have varsity teams in your sport and you need to consult references to see which universities actually give athletic scholarships. This may also apply to other special skills you may have, such as dancing or art. Options differ about how you should demonstrate your skill. If you send a video, be sure it is professionally made and of high quality. For art or music, you should be able to send examples of your work (portfolio).
3. **Do you know a college or university that hopes to internationalize its campus but has a low representation from your part of the world?** Usually colleges and universities that offer any financial aid to international students do so because they want superior students who will provide international breadth to the campus. Find such universities by consulting with students and professionals who have studied recently in the U. S. and by discussing this with your educational advisor. These are usually small liberal arts colleges or colleges with religious affiliations. Apply to the college or university that may be a good prospect and request financial aid with the application. Your academic record, however, must be excellent for this to be successful. No financial aid is available for English as a second language study: so you must have excellent English skills TOEFL 550-600 (paper) or 213-250 (computer) to be considered. But be sure to find out whether the college has your field of study and why they are interested in supporting students from other countries.
4. **What institutions have given at least partial aid to first year foreign students in the past?** You can answer this question by looking through reference books especially the *College Handbook - Foreign Student Supplement*. If an institution says "No" to the question about financial aid, however, don't apply for financial aid. That means that the institution really has none to offer.
5. **If you have partial funding of your own, are you willing to study at a community college for the first two years in order to establish your aptitude and reduce your costs, or are you willing to study at a less expensive university or college?** Choosing an institution

whose total cost is less than \$12,000 per year rather than one that costs \$24,000 represents an effective \$12,000 scholarship. In general you can stretch available funds much farther if you plan to spend at least the first two years at a less expensive institution, but be sure your credit hours will transfer.

6. **Can you reduce the number of courses you need to take by taking Advanced Placement examinations or transferring courses from home country institution?** If previous education enables you to get US college credit for advanced placement examinations, you can reduce the time you spend in the United States.

Although US colleges and universities represent only a possible source or last resort for financial aid, you should not hesitate to apply for aid. Application for aid **will not prejudice your chances of admission** to a chosen program of study. On the other hand, since almost all scholarships cover only a part of the tuition, state the amount you do have available for study, if any, rather than asking for a full scholarship. It will greatly increase your chances of support. Do not, however, understate the amount of funds needed in the expectation of later obtaining additional aid. If you do need a full scholarship, be sure to say so and to specify what types of expenses you will need to have covered. Opportunities for financial aid (including employment) are severely limited once you are already in the United States.

Additional Resources

The DAI Library contains several directories to assist with your funding search including:

- College Financial Aid Made Easy
- Grants for Foreign and International Programs
- Guide to Funding for International and Foreign Programs
- Peterson's College Money Handbook
- Peterson's Scholarships, Grants & Prizes
- Peterson's Sport's Scholarships and College Athletics Programs
- Scholarships and Grants for Study or Research in the USA: A Scholarship Handbook for Foreign Nationals
- Winning Money for College

Adapted from "Financial Aid: Undergraduate Students", US Education Information Center, Kyiv <<http://www.irex.ru/reac/advisers/handouts/Financial%20Aid/Financial%20Aid%20for%20Undergraduates.pdf>>.

FINANCIAL AID: GRADUATE STUDENTS

Financial aid for foreign students studying in the USA is extremely limited. Though the competition is very keen financial aid is available for graduate study and research. Financial aid may come from either public or private institutions or private foundations and organizations. At a graduate level students should apply for admission and financial aid directly to the department, and department decides who will be accepted and awarded financial assistance. Remember, that many schools want to internationalize their campuses. If a school has no students from Germany, they may be willing to fund such a student to increase diversity.

Students will have a greater chance of obtaining financial assistance if they:

- Show evidence of high level of academic achievement;
- Have high standardized test scores (TOEFL, GRE, GMAT);
- Demonstrate financial need and/or have private funding to cover some of the cost. Financial need is not crucial for some awards at the graduate level;
- A field of study or teaching experience in a subject offered at the undergraduate level (opportunities for teaching assistantships);
- A field of specialization or research interest which parallels those of university's department and faculty or the private funding source (opportunities for research assistantships and grants).

Aid from US Universities

Although availability of financial assistance from university departments varies directly with the field, many foreign graduate students finance US education through assistantships. To locate likely sources of aid, first consult the *Peterson's Guide to Graduate and Professional Programs*, available in the advising center. General information about the program that you are interested in also includes information on financial aid awarded by the department. Loans of work/study programs are not available to foreign students. Choose several institutions that offer assistantships and consult other references for further information.

Fellowships

As a rule they are based on academic merit and generally have no teaching or

research obligations. The department normally awards fellowships after the first year of study. Graduate fellowships may be modest, covering only tuition and fees, and monthly cash payments for maintenance Fellowships do not usually cover the total cost of living and studying.

Scholarships

As a rule they are based on academic merit, generally require no repayment obligation and usually cover full or partial tuition.

Assistantships

This is the most common form of financial aid at the graduate level. Assistantships are cash awards which require the performance of services related to the field of study, usually about 20 hours per week. Sometimes an assistantship carries with it a waiver or reduction of tuition. Awards may range from as little as \$500 to as much as \$17,000 (or effectively higher, if high tuition costs are waived) for an academic year. US income tax must be paid on all forms of graduate financial assistance including assistantships. Competition for all types of assistantships is intense, since only limited numbers are available at any one institution.

Foreign applicant's financial need is taken into consideration; the most important factor in selection is academic achievement and promise in the field of study. Practically all awards for graduate study are made one year at a time. Renewal is not automatic and depends on your performance and the availability of funds. There are several types of assistantships:

1) Teaching Assistantships

- Based on academic qualifications and preference is given to advanced students. In university departments with large numbers of undergraduates in introductory courses, teaching assistantships may be available, even for the first year of graduate study.
- Teaching assistants work about 20 hours per week. They may supervise undergraduate laboratory classes, lead discussion groups or teach small classes. Students are usually paid a salary or stipend.
- Increasingly, universities require that teaching assistants pass the Test of Spoken English (TSE) before receiving a teaching assistantship. Often universities require teaching fellows to complete seminars which prepare them to teach in the US educational milieu. If you are interested in applying for teaching fellowship, mention any previous teaching experience you may have.

2) Research Assistantships

- Based on academic qualifications and research interests are rarely given to first year students. A Research Assistant position involves performance of research services, about 20 hours per week, related to the field of study. The student is usually paid a salary or stipend.
- Look for institutions that have grants in your field and match your interests. Professors who are the principal researcher for grants in your area will often single out your application for funding, especially if you have proven research experience.

3) Administrative Assistantships

- Based on need and academic qualifications. Some administrative offices of the university, such as the Foreign Student Advising Office, may offer administrative assistantships requiring work of 10-20 hours per week.

Strategies for Application:

- Start early - 18 months to two years is not too soon!
- Use references to find institutions that closely match your specialty and grant programs or research grants that apply specifically to your field. Do not apply to programs just because they exist but because they match your interests and expertise.
- Try to take standardized examinations as early as possible. TOEFL and GRE or GMAT are essential.
- If you have published research, documented music performances, an art portfolio or other evidence of achievement, find a way to submit them as part of your application.
- Ask your educational adviser to offer suggestions about your application and the documents that should accompany it.
- Try to do everything that the university requests in its application procedure. If you cannot comply with a request, explain why and suggest alternatives.
- Emphasize your academic and research achievements, your plans for your academic and research work, and your plans for the future. At the graduate level, the primary reason for awarding financial aid is merit, not need. Be honest and accurate about the level of your need, but place emphasis on your academic promise rather than your need for total funding.
- The appearance of your application is important. Try to type or print neatly all information requested. Never send copies of letters, but send originals addressed to the appropriate person in the academic department or graduate admissions office.

Aid from Private U.S. Sources and International Organizations

Private U.S. agencies, foundations, business corporations and professional associations may award financial aid in the interest of furthering international exchange. International organizations such as United Nations, the Organization of American States and the Institute of International Education are other possible sources of financial aid. Since these institutions are large and complex, writing to eligible, and address the office indicated. Many foundation awards and grants are directed toward a particular group (e.g. women, irrigation engineers, children of journalists); you must read carefully to see whether you fit into any of the categories.

Greater foundation support is usually available for students in the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences. Apply only for awards for which you match the specifications. For applied scientists and engineering there are more opportunities for funding through research grants to university departments or to primary investigation based in universities than through foundation.

If an application requires you to write a research or project proposal, pay particular attention to this step. If possible, have the proposal checked by a professional in your field who has worked in the United States.

Qualifying for an Award or Grant: To receive funds for research or study in the United States, you must often submit a carefully designed plan for your proposed research. As a rule, your proposal will be competing with those of other excellent scholars. It is not enough to state your qualifications by simply citing your diploma, your position or your experience.

Additional Resources

The DAI Library contains several directories to assist with your funding search including:

- Getting Money for Graduate School
- Graduate School in the United States: The Application, Financing, and Orientation
- Grants for Foreign and International Programs
- Guide to Funding for International and Foreign Programs
- Guide to Proposal Writing
- Peterson's Scholarships, Grants & Prizes
- Peterson's College Money Handbook
- Scholarships and Grants for Study or Research in the USA: A Scholarship Handbook for Foreign Nationals

Adapted from "Financial Aid: Graduate Students", US Education Information Center, Kyiv <<http://www.irex.ru/reac/advisers/handouts/Financial%20Aid/Financial%20Aid%20for%20Graduate%20Students.pdf>>.

STUDENT VISAS

The Immigration and Nationality Act provides two nonimmigrant visa categories for persons wishing to study in the United States. The "F" visa is for academic studies, and the "M" visa is for nonacademic or vocational studies. Please read this information for general information on how to apply for an F1 or M1 student visa.

For general student related information, visit the Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs website (<http://educationusa.state.gov/>) to learn about educational opportunities for undergraduate and graduate study, opportunities for scholars, financial aid, testing, admissions, and much more.

Background Requirements

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Changes in U.S. immigration law, effective November 30, 1996, require that no alien may be issued an F-1 visa to attend a U.S. public elementary or middle school (K-8). Any alien who wishes to attend public high school (grades 9-12) in the United States in student visa (F-1) status must submit evidence that the local school district has been reimbursed in advance for the unsubsidized per capita cost of the education. Also, attendance at U.S. public high schools cannot exceed a total of 12 months. Please note that these changes do not affect other visa categories such as the J-1 exchange visitor program or the qualified school-age child of an alien who holds another type of nonimmigrant visa (i.e., A, E, H, I, L, etc.).

No alien may be issued an F-1 visa in order to attend a publicly-funded adult education program.

Scholastic Preparation

The student visa applicant must have successfully completed a course of study normally required for enrollment. The student, unless coming to participate exclusively in an English language training program, must either be sufficiently proficient in English to pursue the intended course of study, or the school must have made special arrangements for English language courses or teach the course in the student's native language.

Financial Resources

Applicants must also prove that sufficient funds are or will be available from an identified and reliable financial source to defray all living and school expenses during the entire period of anticipated study in the United States. Specifically, applicants must prove they have enough readily available funds to meet all expenses for the first year of study, and that adequate funds will be available for each subsequent year of study. The M-1 student visa applicants must have evidence that sufficient funds are immediately available to pay all tuition and living costs for the entire period of intended stay.

Acceptance Form

An applicant coming to the United States to study must be accepted for a full course of study by an educational institution approved by the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security (BCIS). The institution must send to the applicant a Form I-20A-B, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status for Academic and Language Students. The nonacademic or vocational institution must send to the student a Form I-20M-N, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (M-1) Student Status For Vocational Students. Educational institutions obtain Forms I-20A-B and I-20M-N from the BCIS.

Visa ineligibility / Waiver

The nonimmigrant visa application Form DS-156 lists classes of persons who are ineligible under U.S. law to receive visas. In some instances an applicant who is ineligible, but who is otherwise properly classifiable as a student, may apply for a waiver of ineligibility and be issued a visa if the waiver is approved.

Applying for a Student Visa

Applicants for student visas should generally apply at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate with jurisdiction over their place of permanent residence. Although visa applicants may apply at any U.S. consular office abroad, it may be more difficult to qualify for the visa outside the country of permanent residence.

Required Documentation

Each applicant for a student visa must pay a nonrefundable US\$100 application fee and submit:

1. An application Form DS-156, together with a Form DS-158. Both forms must be completed and signed. Some applicants will also be required to complete and sign Form DS-157. A separate form is needed for children, even if they are included in a parent's passport. The DS-156 must be the February 2003 date, either the electronic "e-form application" or the non-electronic version. (You will find the Nonimmigrant Visa Application Form DS-156 at

<http://evisaforms.state.gov/>). You may also check with the Embassy Consular Section where you will apply to determine if the hard-copy blank DS-156 form is available, should you need it.

2. A passport valid for travel to the United States and with a validity date at least six months beyond the applicant's intended period of stay in the United States. If more than one person is included in the passport, each person desiring a visa must make an application;
3. One (1) 2x2 photograph. (Review the photo format explained in nonimmigrant photograph requirements at <http://travel.state.gov/photorequirements.html>).
4. For the "F" applicant, a Form I-20A-B. For the "M" applicant, a Form I-20M-N.
5. Evidence of sufficient funds.

Other Documentation

Student visa applicants must establish to the satisfaction of the consular officer that they have binding ties to a residence in a foreign country which they have no intention of abandoning, and that they will depart the United States when they have completed their studies. It is impossible to specify the exact form the evidence should take since applicants' circumstances vary greatly.

U.S. Port of Entry

Applicants should be aware that a visa does not guarantee entry into the United States. The Directorate of Border and Transportation Security has authority to deny admission. Also, the period for which the bearer of an exchange visitor visa is authorized to remain in the United States is determined by the Directorate of Border and Transportation Security, not the consular officer. At the port of entry, a Directorate of Border and Transportation Security official validates Form I-94, Record of Arrival-Departure, which notes the length of stay permitted.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Employment

An F-1 student may not accept off-campus employment at any time during the first year of study; however, the BCIS may grant permission to accept off-campus employment after one year. F-1 students may accept on-campus employment from the school without BCIS permission. Except for temporary employment for practical training, an M-1 student may not accept employment.

Family Members

A spouse and unmarried, minor children may also be classified for a nonimmigrant visa to accompany or follow the student. Family members must meet all visa eligibility requirements, including evidence that they will have sufficient funds for their support, and that they will depart the U.S. when the

student's program ends. Spouses and children of students may not accept employment at any time.

Further Inquiries

Questions on how to obtain Forms I-20A-B and I-20M-N should be made to the educational institution. If the institution does not have the forms, it needs to contact the local BCIS office. Questions on visa application procedures at the American consular offices abroad should be addressed to that consular office by the applicant.

Inquiries on visa cases in progress overseas should contact the appropriate U.S. Embassy or Consulate handling your case.

(April 2003)

For more visa details call:

0190-850055 – Live service (Montag-Freitag 07:00-20:00)

0190-85005800 – Bandansage (24 Std.)

0190-850058-01 – Fax-Abruf (24 Std.)

(Euro 1,86/Min.)

Information is also available on the US Embassy website:

www.usembassy.de/visa.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information on applying for a student visa, please visit the following websites:

- Destination USA, U.S. Department of State:
www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/student_application.html
- Education USA, U.S. Department of State:
educationusa.state.gov/undergrad/visas/guide.htm
- U.S. Education Information Center, Moscow, "Most Frequently Asked Questions About Visa Application Process":
www.useic.ru/departure/visa.htm

Adapted from: "Foreign Students - Tips for U.S. Visas". U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Visa Services
<<http://travel.state.gov/visa/foreignstuden.html>>.

ACCREDITATION

As a direct result of the historical development of American universities as institutions independent of federal government influence, accreditation has developed as a voluntary process to assess educational quality. Institutional self-study is at the heart of this process which takes into account the great diversity of post-secondary institutions in the United States.

Accreditation has two fundamental purposes: 1) to assure the quality of an institution or program, and 2) to assist in the improvement of an institution or program. Accreditation is voluntarily sought by institutions and establishes that the educational institution or program has been found to meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality.

There are three types of accreditation bodies:

- 1) **Regional** (or Institutional)
- 2) **Professional** (or Specialized)
- 3) **National**

REGIONAL ACCREDITATION

The regional accrediting bodies are voluntary associations of institutions engaged in the self-regulatory process of assessing and improving educational quality. They serve to assure the public that an institution's purposes are appropriate and soundly conceived, that its educational programs have been intelligently devised, that its purposes are being accomplished, and that the institution should continue to merit confidence because of its organization and resources.

An institutional accrediting body considers the characteristics of whole institutions. For this reason an institutional accrediting body gives attention not only to the educational offerings of the institutions it accredits, but also to other such institutional characteristics as the student personnel services, financial conditions, and administrative strength. Improvement is encouraged by the institutional accrediting body through the requirement that the accredited institution conducts periodic self-evaluations seeking to identify what the institution does well, determining the areas in which improvement is needed, and developing plans to address needed improvements.

The accreditation process using a common pattern. The pattern requires integral self-study of the institution or program, followed by an on-site visit by an evaluation team, and a subsequent review and decision by a central governing group. Within this general pattern the accrediting bodies have developed a variety of procedures adapted to their own circumstances. Increasingly, attention has been given to educational outcomes as a basis for evaluation.

Regional or professional accreditation cannot guarantee the quality of individual graduates or of individual courses with an institution or program, but can give reasonable assurance of the context and quality of the education offered.

There are **six** regional accrediting bodies:

- **Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools**
- **New England Association of Schools and Colleges**
- **North Central Association of Colleges and Schools**
- **The Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges**
- **Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**
- **Western Association of Schools and Colleges**

German students, please note: The regional accreditation of an institution is a minimum requirement by German authorities for the recognition of courses of study and degrees earned in the U.S. As concerns the recognition of course work and degrees obtained in American Type Programs in Germany or Europe, it would be wise to inquire about the recognition of such studies with the appropriate German ministry of science (Wissenschaftsministerium of the Land where a person is residing) before enrolling.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

There also exist institutional accrediting organizations which are **national rather than regional**. National accrediting bodies are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for the purpose of determining the eligibility of an institution for its students to receive federal loans. As regards transfer students, U.S. universities are autonomous in their admission decisions and **many will accept only students who transfer from institutions which are regionally accredited**.

The following text is taken from the book: Understanding Accreditation (The Joseph Bass Higher Education Series):

"The institutional accrediting organizations that are national rather than regional fall into two major categories:

- (1) associations whose members are predominantly proprietary schools
 - **the Accrediting Council of Independent Colleges and Schools;**
 - **the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools,**
 - **the National Home Study Council, - and**

- 2) Associations whose members are predominantly church-related schools, such as
 - **the American Association of Bible Colleges**
 - **the Association of Theological Schools**

The associations that accredit large numbers of proprietary schools do not restrict their membership to institutions seeking profit. Among their members are private nonprofit institutions, religion schools, and even entities sponsored by federal agencies."

PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION

Professional **or specialized accreditation** applies mainly to the approval of programs, curricula, disciplines or units within institutions of postsecondary education. In some instances (art, chiropractic, music, for example) specialized accrediting bodies accredit single-purpose, free standing schools as part or all of their responsibility.

In some fields (e.g. medicine, law, dentistry) graduation from an accredited program in the field is a requirement for receiving a license to practice the profession in the U.S. Because of the limitation of focus to a single program, many specialized accrediting bodies require that the institutions offering the programs be institutionally accredited before consideration can be given for program accreditation.

Specialized accreditation encourages program improvement by application of specific requirements to measure characteristics of a program and by making judgments about the overall quality of the program. For a non-accredited program, the requirements serve as specific goals to be achieved. In addition to accrediting standards, assistance for program improvement is provided through the counsel of the accrediting visiting team members, which includes practitioners of the profession and experienced and successful faculty members and administrators from other institutions. They are national in scope but vary in size. Most specialized accrediting bodies accredit the "first professional degree" program.

German students, please note: With regard to the recognition of business studies and MBA degrees, German authorities increasingly require that the programs attended are professionally accredited by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

To find out about the accreditation status of institutions, check in the most current edition of **Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education** available at the DAI Library. The book has also a complete listing of all specialized accrediting bodies.

How to avoid fake schools and fake degrees

The following text is taken from "**Bogus U.S. Institutions**", a publication by the National Liaison Committee on Foreign Student Admissions (NCL):

"A bogus institution or diploma mill is an organization that sells diplomas, transcripts and other academic credentials for a fee without requiring classroom attendance, independent study or other acceptable methods of transmitting knowledge. In some cases the applicants are asked to provide a summary of their life experiences for which they are then granted a complete degree. In other cases, a diploma and/or transcript is provided without any evidence of learning having taken place. Documents obtained in this fashion are bogus (false). Attempting to obtain a job or an education using these documents is considered illegal and could subject you to penalties. A degree from a bogus institution or diploma mill will waste your time and money and create problems for you.

What to Look For

The following hints to help you spot a bogus institution or diploma mill appeared in the June 1984 Data Dispenser, a newsletter published by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers:

- Does the institution offer shortcut programs that are appropriate for the level of the credential? Short cuts that are too good to be true should set off a warning signal.
- Does the literature or catalog from this college or university contain the words pursuing accreditation, licensed, authorized, (state) approved, recognized or chartered? If so, the institution may not be legitimate.
- Does the college or university offer backdated degrees, that is, degrees dated prior to the time of actual enrollment? Legitimate institutions do not offer backdated degrees.
- Does the catalog or literature from the school contain a picture of the diploma issued by the school? Pictures of diplomas are not generally displayed in the literature of legitimate institutions.
- Has the institution been in existence for only a few months or years (at least under its current name and at its current location)? Institutions that are very new or have recently moved should be viewed with caution.
- Are the degrees issued by the college or university accepted by any other accredited colleges or universities?

If so, the school should be able to provide a list. Check the degrees which the schools listed. The fact that an institution appears on such a list does not necessarily mean the institution agrees with the statement.

- Does the college or university have a physical facility? Is the facility located at the address you use when you correspond with the institution? If not, you should be concerned.
- Is the name of the institution similar to, but different from, that of a well known institution? A similar name is often used to give credibility to an institution that is not legitimate."

If you suspect an institution might not be legitimate, verify its accreditation status by looking it up in the latest edition of **Accredited institutions of Postsecondary Education** (in the DAI Library).

Adapted from "Accreditation", U.S. Information Service, Germany.

ACCREDITATION / AKKREDITIERUNG

Accreditation

Accreditation is the system of recognition and quality assurance for institutions and programs of higher education in the United States. When deciding on a program of study, one of your main concerns should be whether the program is properly accredited. There is no legal restriction on the use of the words "accredited," "accrediting body," or "accrediting association" in the United States. As a result, it is important that you check whether an institution and its programs hold accreditation from a "recognized" accrediting body or bodies. To be considered recognized, an accrediting body should meet one or both of the following criteria:

- It is a member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA). To find out if it is, consult the organizations' Web sites (<http://www.chea.org> or <http://www.aspa-usa.org>), or look it up in the directory Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education (see the bibliography). Copies of the directory are available at U.S. educational information and advising centers worldwide.
- It is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. While the department does not get involved in the process of accrediting institutions, it publishes a list of accrediting agencies that it recognizes as reliable authorities on the quality of education or training provided by institutions of higher education. For a full list, see <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/closedschool/accred.html>.

Recognition by the U.S. Department of Education or membership in CHEA or ASPA is an indicator of the reliability of an accrediting association.

Institutional accreditation can be divided into two types: regional accreditation and national accreditation. Regional accreditation is the primary type of institutional accreditation used in the United States. It is carried out by six organizations that cover different geographic regions of the country. The six regional accrediting bodies collectively serve more than 3,500 of the approximately 3,600 degree-granting institutions in the United States.

Akkreditierung

Die Akkreditierung ist das System der Legitimation und Qualitätssicherung von Institutionen und Programmen der weiterführenden Bildung in den Vereinigten Staaten. Bei der Entscheidung für ein Studienprogramm sollten Sie insbesondere darauf achten, dass das Programm ordnungsgemäß akkreditiert ist. In den Vereinigten Staaten sind die Begriffe "akkreditiert", "Akkreditierungsgremium" oder "Akkreditierungsverband" nicht gesetzlich geschützt. Folglich ist es wichtig zu prüfen, ob eine Institution und ihre Programme von einem "offiziellen" Akkreditierungsgremium oder -gremien anerkannt wurde. Um als offiziell zu gelten, muss ein Akkreditierungsgremium eine oder beide der folgenden Kriterien erfüllen:

- Es ist Mitglied des Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) oder des Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA). Zur Überprüfung der Mitgliedschaft besuchen Sie die Website der Organisationen (<http://www.chea.org> oder <http://www.aspa-usa.org>) oder schlagen im Leitfaden der Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education nach (siehe Bibliografie). Der Leitfaden ist bei den amerikanischen Bildungsinformations- und -beratungszentren weltweit vorrätig.
- Es ist vom US-Bildungsministerium anerkannt. Das Ministerium ist nicht am Verfahren zur Akkreditierung von Institutionen beteiligt, veröffentlicht aber eine Liste von Akkreditierungsagenturen, die es als verlässliche Bewerter der Qualität der Bildung oder Ausbildung von Institutionen weiterführender Bildung einstuft. Eine vollständige Liste erhalten Sie unter <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/closedschool/accred.html>.

Die Anerkennung durch das US-Bildungsministerium oder die Mitgliedschaft im CHEA oder ASPA ist ein Indikator für die Verlässlichkeit eines Akkreditierungsverbands. Es gibt zwei Hauptarten der Akkreditierung für Bildungseinrichtungen, an denen man in den Vereinigten Staaten akademische Abschlüsse erwerben kann: institutionell und programmbezogen. Wie der Name bereits sagt, wird bei der institutionellen Akkreditierung die gesamte Institution geprüft und akkreditiert. Bei der programmbezogenen Akkreditierung, die manchmal auch als berufsbezogene oder spezialisierte Akkreditierung bezeichnet wird, werden Programme, Abteilungen oder einzelne Fakultäten einer Institution anerkannt. Zum Beispiel ein Physiotherapieprogramm, eine Wirtschaftsfakultät oder eine Fakultät für Ingenieurwissenschaften. (Für weitere Informationen, siehe "programmbezogene Akkreditierung"). Verschiedene Akkreditierungssverbände oder -gremien führen diese Arten der Akkreditierung durch. Institutionelle Akkreditierung kann in zwei Arten unterteilt werden: regionale und nationale Akkreditierung.

Regionale Akkreditierung ist die Art der institutionellen Akkreditierung, die in den Vereinigten Staaten am häufigsten vorkommt. Sie wird von sechs Organisationen durchgeführt, die für verschiedene geografische Gebiete des Landes zuständig sind. Mehr als 3.500 der 3.600 Bildungseinrichtungen, an denen man in den Vereinigten Staaten einen akademischen Abschluss erwerben kann, werden von insgesamt sechs regionalen Akkreditierungsgremien betreut.

Regional Accrediting Bodies / Regionalen Akkreditierungsgremien

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools - Commission on Higher Education (MSA/CHE): <http://www.msache.org>
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges - Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NEASC-CIHE): <http://www.neasc.org/cihe/cihe.htm>
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools - The Higher Learning Commission: <http://www.ncacihe.org>
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges - Commission on Colleges and Universities: <http://www.cocnasc.org>
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) - Commission on Colleges: <http://www.sacscoc.org>
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) - The Senior College Commission: <http://www.was.wascweb.org>

Additional Resources

We also recommend you read the more detailed guide, *Booklet Three: Short-Term Study, English Language Programs, Distance Education and Accreditation* from the *If You Want to Study in the United States* series (<http://educationusa.state.gov/study/pubs.htm>), which is also available for purchase or for reference use in the DAI Library.

From "Studying in the U.S" and "Studium in den USA", U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany, Berlin. <<http://www.usembassy.de/exchanges/study.htm>>.

How to avoid fake schools and fake degrees

The following text is taken from "**Bogus U.S. Institutions**", a publication by the National Liaison Committee on Foreign Student Admissions (NCL):

"A bogus institution or diploma mill is an organization that sells diplomas, transcripts and other academic credentials for a fee without requiring classroom attendance, independent study or other acceptable methods of transmitting knowledge. In some cases the applicants are asked to provide a summary of their life experiences for which they are then granted a complete degree. In other cases, a diploma and/or transcript is provided without any evidence of learning having taken place.

Documents obtained in this fashion are bogus (false). Attempting to obtain a job or an education using these documents is considered illegal and could subject you to penalties. A degree from a bogus institution or diploma mill will waste your time and money and create problems for you.

What to Look For

The following hints to help you spot a bogus institution or diploma mill appeared in the June 1984 Data Dispenser, a newsletter published by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers:

- Does the institution offer shortcut programs that are appropriate for the level of the credential? Short cuts that are too good to be true should set off a warning signal.
- Does the literature or catalog from this college or university contain the words pursuing accreditation, licensed, authorized, (state) approved, recognized or chartered? If so, the institution may not be legitimate.
- Does the college or university offer backdated degrees, that is, degrees dated prior to the time of actual enrollment? Legitimate institutions do not offer backdated degrees.
- Does the catalog or literature from the school contain a picture of the diploma issued by the school? Pictures of diplomas are not generally displayed in the literature of legitimate institutions.
- Has the institution been in existence for only a few months or years (at least under its current name and at its current location)? Institutions that are very new or have recently moved should be viewed with caution.
- Are the degrees issued by the college or university accepted by any other accredited colleges or universities?

If so, the school should be able to provide a list. Check the degrees which the schools listed. The fact that an institution appears on such a list does not necessarily mean the institution agrees with the statement.

- Does the college or university have a physical facility? Is the facility located at the address you use when you correspond with the institution? If not, you should be concerned.
- Is the name of the institution similar to, but different from, that of a well known institution? A similar name is often used to give credibility to an institution that is not legitimate."

If you suspect an institution might not be legitimate, verify its accreditation status by looking it up in the latest edition of **Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education** (in the DAI Library).

From "Accreditation", U.S. Information Service, Germany.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

A variety of English language courses are available to foreign students at US academic institutions as well as at independent language schools and other institutions. Enrollment in an English language course is often the first step in a student's academic, vocational or technical training.

Types of ESL Programs

English language programs (ESL programs) may be part of a college or university, or they may operate as private, independent programs which are sometimes located on a college or university campus but operate separately. University-based programs usually operate on a semester or a quarter system. Private programs are usually more flexible often starting a new course every week and usually offering shorter courses as well as longer programs. Both types of institutions offer intensive and semi-intensive courses for beginners to more advanced levels, and professional and summer programs all of which may be with or without optional extra-curricular activities.

Intensive ESL courses

Intensive English courses generally require more than the average 20 hours per week in the classroom and are academic oriented. Many programs are designed to prepare students for admission into an American college or university.

Semi-intensive ESL courses

Semi-intensive courses generally include several hours per day of classroom instruction and may offer numerous additional out of class activities and programs for the remainder of the day.

Professional English Courses

Many English language programs are designed to fit the needs of professionals. Universities may have business English courses or special certificate programs in different subjects. Other schools offer English courses specific to individual fields such as law, medicine, computer science, hospitality, dental hygiene, etc. Both university based and individual programs may also offer internships or work experience with American businesses as part of their program.

Additional Activities and Programs

Many English language programs provide additional activities and programs to ESL students. They can add a cultural aspect, offer additional instruction in a sport or other skill and help students to meet American families and apply the language skills they are learning. Some of these special services include:

- Possibility to take academic courses while enrolled in ESL classes
- Educational counseling
- Assistance with college and university applications
- Field trips, excursions and cultural activities
- Homestays (lodging and meals) with American families
- Training or instruction in specific fields (i.e. a sport, dance, etc)
- Organized recreational and sports activities

While not all of these services may be available, they can add another dimension to what you are learning in the classroom and will make you feel much more a part of the school and city where you are studying. You should inquire about these activities when choosing a program.

Cost

Cost varies greatly with each program. Tuition fees for English language programs can range between \$150 and \$300 per week, and room and board ranges between \$125 and \$350 per week depending on the location of the school. Other fees such as insurance, athletic fees, health care, optional field trips and books can total up to \$800 per session. Financial aid is extremely rare.

Visas

Visa requirements have changed in the past two years and are still changing. Contact the Consular Section of the US Embassy about current requirements. Be sure to tell them what type of program you wish to study in and for how long. Also contact the school or program you wish to attend and ask them which visa you will need.

If you are studying full time - for more than 18 hours per week - you will definitely have to apply for the F-1 visa, which is for full time academic study at a university or other academic institution in the US. In order to apply for this visa you will need to submit a completed I-20 form to the US Embassy. The I-20 form will be sent to you by the US educational institution where you intend to study once you have confirmed your acceptance of the course and submitted proof of finances.

Information is also available on the US Embassy website:
www.usembassy.de/visa.

Accreditation

In the near future, in order to be able to send I-20 forms to international students who want to study English in the US, all Intensive English Language Programs (IEPs) in the US will be required to apply for accreditation by an agency recognized by the US Department of Education. Accreditation guarantees certain minimum standards. IEPs that are not part of university programs and therefore do not have accreditation through the university, must be independently accredited by a recognized accrediting body. Currently the only recognized accrediting body is the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training. However, the TESOL Commission on Accreditation expects to be recognized in the near future.

In addition there are two national organizations that recognize, as opposed to accredit, IEPs who go through a self-study process: *the American Association of Intensive English Programs* and the *University and College Intensive English Programs*. Most schools list their accreditation and their professional association membership in their information brochures.

How to Choose

You will need to do plenty of research when choosing an English Language Program. What type of program best fits your needs? Are the courses in which you wish to enroll appropriate for your language proficiency? In addition you will need to consider the following:

- cost and possible financial aid availability
- accreditation issues
- the qualifications of the faculty
- housing (dorm, hotel, hostel, homestay etc.)
- class size and cultural diversity of the student body
- any additional services offered

How to Apply

Obtain the application materials from the institutions you are interested in attending. To do this, write, e-mail, fax, or phone the institution. Some institutions may have their application materials on their web sites. When requesting information also inquire about admission deadlines. Admission is generally open. This means that the institution will accept all applicants, providing they meet minimum criteria, such as financial ability and perhaps a minimum proficiency in English if you will be applying to a professional English course.

Complete the application and return all required documents by the admission deadline if applicable. After you have been admitted or in some instances, as part of the application process, the institute will ask you to provide proof of finances. This is necessary before they can provide you with the I-20 form, which you will need to get your visa.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

The TOEFL is a standardized exam that tests English proficiency. It is required of non-native English speakers for admission into a degree program at almost every college or university in the US and some specialized English Language programs. The exam measures reading comprehension, listening comprehension and writing skills. It is not a language qualification in itself. However, many of the English language programs available in the US also prepare you for the TOEFL exam.

Additional Resources

The DAI Library contains numerous guides and course directories for English language courses including:

- AAIEP: Member Profiles
- International Guide To English Language Programs in the USA
- Intensive English USA (IIE)
- UCIEP University and College Intensive English Programs: Member Profiles
- Where and How: Learning English

We strongly recommend you read the more detailed guide, *Booklet Three: Short-Term Study, English Language Programs, Distance Education and Accreditation* from the *If You Want to Study in the United States* series (<http://educationusa.state.gov/study/pubs.htm>), which is also available for purchase or for reference use in the DAI Library.

Online Resources

- American Association of Intensive English Programs: www.aaiep.org
- University and College Intensive English Programs: www.uciep.org
- Language Course Finder: www.language-learning.net

Adapted from "English Language Courses in the US", U.S. Embassy, Bern
<www.usembassy.ch/Education/English.htm>.

MASTER'S IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The MBA in the US is traditionally a two-year (full-time study), professional master's degree providing general training in business administration/management for students holding a first degree, not necessarily in business.

Curriculum

Core Subjects: The MBA consists of two components: the core and the elective courses. The core is made up of a group of courses designed to provide fundamental business skills. Most universities will have some compulsory subjects from the core courses. Usually in the second year an MBA program will offer concentration in one or a combination of the core subjects. The core can include or be a blend of the following subjects:

- Economics
- Human resource management
- Microeconomics
- Information management and technology
- Finance/Accounting
- Marketing and marketing strategies
- Quantitative business analysis
- Organizational and operational management

Elective Subjects: Elective subjects complement the core courses and also vary greatly between MBA programs. Some electives are core subjects at a more advanced level. Among the elective courses you may see are the following:

- Distribution and logistics
- Leadership
- Manufacturing issues
- Taxation
- Multinational accounting
- Entrepreneurship

Some electives are related to specific areas of business like property management, health administration, educational administration. Other electives are much broader business-related subjects such as international law, environmental policies and computer studies.

Accreditation

Unlike many other countries, the establishment and maintenance of educational standards in the US are not the responsibility of a federal education ministry. The US has a system of voluntary non-governmental evaluation called accreditation. (See the DAI pamphlet "Accreditation" for more information.)

The main body concerned with the accreditation of US academic programs in business administration and management is the AACSB-*International Association for Management Education* (www.aacsb.edu). International students considering studying at US business programs that do not hold AACSB accreditation should base their decision on whether enrolment in an unaccredited program will have an effect on the careers they plan to pursue upon returning to their home country.

Length of MBA Programs

Degree requirements and the length of the programs vary depending on the school and the design of the program. The traditional MBA program, studied full-time, takes two academic years. During the summer months students are encouraged to complete an internship.

One-year MBA programs are offered to business undergraduates who have already completed the basic business courses and have some work experience.

Part-time MBA programs are less accessible for international students because of visa regulations, which require students to be enrolled full-time. There is an exception, however, for spouses of F-1 visa holders, who can enroll in part-time study.

Other Types of Programs

Open/Distance Learning programs are becoming more available and practical as advances in computer technology allow students to learn via the Internet and videoconferencing. Distance courses may also include seminar visits, weekend sessions and summer school.

On-line MBA programs varies with each university. The bulk of the degree is done via the Internet. If you choose to pursue an on-line MBA, you can expect to conduct your course independently, communicating with professors and fellow students via email and on-line discussion groups.

Executive MBA Programs are for individuals within the upper levels of management, who have considerable work experience. The curriculum differs from regular MBA programs in that the program provides peer group

experience. The curricula are streamlined and often operate outside of conventional business hours.

Choosing an MBA School

Rankings of business schools are available but should not be heavily relied upon as they are unofficial, subjective and can be misleading. In choosing a program, prospective applicants may want to consider the following criteria:

- Selectivity (taking into account your competitiveness)
- Costs and availability of financial aid
- Teaching methods (case-study versus a quantitative and analytical approach)
- Employment placement services
- Size and make-up of classes

Admission

Admission factors include your academic record, Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) scores, previous work experience, letters of recommendation and application form with essays.

Academic Record: Students from Germany should hold a degree equivalent to the U.S. bachelor's degree and a leading business school is unlikely to accept less than "B" average on all coursework taken (on a scale of A, B, C, D and F). (This is generally equivalent to a 2.0 in the German system, on a scale of 1-6.) Until recently, business schools have been fairly flexible about degrees because they put almost equal weight on other factors. The undergraduate field of study is not stipulated (if you are doing a traditional, two-year MBA), nevertheless business schools might require upon entry, an understanding of the principles of economics, accountancy and mathematical competence up to calculus level.

GMAT Scores: The majority of business schools require results from the **Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)**. Some schools require a minimum GMAT score, but many do not so as to attract a variety of applicants. Registration information is available on-line (www.gmat.org) and also from the DAI Library.

Work Experience: Though not mandatory, many business schools look for candidates that have at least two to five years full-time work experience.

Letters of Recommendation: One or more letters of recommendation are generally required and if possible should be written by both previous or current employers and professors. The letters should be specific, stating precise skills and achievements.

Application Forms: The application forms are usually several pages in length. Many business schools provide lengthy forms and pay considerable attention to the way in which the candidate presents him/herself. Self-evaluation is usually a component and a batch of short essays will be required.

Essays: Application essays will usually ask you to explain your goals, analyze your work experience, describe significant achievements in your life and/or give you a business scenario that you must analyze. The DAI Library offers an Application Essay Review service, which allows you to meet with an educational adviser for a private review.

Financing

Many business students are self-financing so it is worth taking into account that tuition costs differ widely between institutions and can be more than \$20,000 per year. You must also consider living, books and personal costs. After personal resources, the other main types of financial aid include scholarships from independent foundations, financial aid awarded by the individual business schools and loans. The DAI Library also has financial aid directories available in its reference library that list other possible sources of scholarships.

Additional Resources

The DAI Library contains several directories concerning business education in the US, catalogues for US universities and business schools, test preparation guides for reference use and for sale, publications that rank business schools, business magazines and many other resources. You are welcome to consult these materials during our opening hours.

The DAI Library has business school directories available including:

- *Business Week: Guide to the Best Business Schools*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- *Guide to Graduate Management Programs in the USA*. British Columbia: EI Education International, Ltd.
- *How to Get Into the Top MBA Programs*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- *MBA Programs*. New Jersey: Peterson's.

Adapted from "Master's in Business Administration", US Educational Advisory Service, London. <<http://www.fulbright.co.uk/eas/studyus/subjects/mba.html>>.

LEGAL EDUCATION IN THE US

Types of Law Degrees

In the United States, the formal study of law is only available at the graduate level. To attend an American law school, a student must already hold an undergraduate degree. The most common law degrees offered by American law schools are the professional Juris Doctor (JD) degree and the master's degree in law (LLM).

The **JD degree** is the law degree required to practice as a lawyer in the US and requires three years of study at a law school after completion of an undergraduate degree. Universities may offer first degrees in law-related fields (e.g. a Bachelor of Arts degree in Law and Society) but this is not sufficient to practice as a lawyer.

The **LLM degree** is generally meant for already-qualified lawyers who wish to undertake further study.

Other Postgraduate Law Degrees

Other postgraduate degrees include **master's degrees in Comparative Law (MCL)**, **in Comparative Jurisprudence (MCJ)**, and **in Legal Institutions (MLI)**. These programs differ from the LLM in that they tend to be less specialized and less research-oriented. They consist mainly of taught courses and do not normally require a master's thesis. However, the scope of these degrees can vary from one law school to another. Some may be designed for foreign-educated lawyers, especially for those trained in civil law countries who wish to study the common law principles of the American legal system. Others may be intended for non-law professionals who require knowledge of the legal field.

Degrees awarded at the doctoral level are the **Doctor of Juridical Science (SJD or JSD)** and the **Doctor of Comparative Law Studies (DCL)**. These are the most advanced degrees in law and generally intended for those pursuing an academic career in the legal field. Only a small number of applicants are admitted each year onto these programs, which consist of specialized study and research, as well as a substantial thesis. A list of universities that offer graduate law degrees is available from the DAI Library.

Joint degrees: Most law schools offer the option of joint degrees in various disciplines. The most common degrees are a JD/MBA or a JD/MA in Economics or Political Science. These joint degrees will take more time to complete due to the added degree requirements.

Accreditation

In order to practice as a lawyer, many states require a candidate to have a JD degree from a law school that has been approved by the **American Bar Association (ABA)**. The ABA is the professional association for law and its members include those who practice and teach law as well as current law students. The ABA's Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar (<http://www.abanet.org/legaled>) is recognized by the US Department of Education as the "accrediting agency for professional schools of law".

Acceptance into US Law Schools

Law schools do not require that applicants take an undergraduate degree in a particular subject or to have completed specific courses. Instead, they emphasize the importance of a demanding and well-rounded education with experience in a variety of disciplines. However, there are certain skills and areas of knowledge that the law school candidate should seek to develop. Necessary skills include critical thinking, problem solving, analytical reading, oral and written communication and general research skills.

Basic admissions requirements include a bachelor's degree in any field and the **Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)**. The LSAT measures reading and verbal reasoning skills, and does not require specific knowledge of law. On-line registration is available on the Law Schools Admissions Council's web site (www.lsac.org). You can also obtain an LSAT registration bulletin from the DAI Library.

Acceptance Rates: Despite a small decline in the number of applications over the last two years, competition for a place at a US law school is still fierce, especially for international applicants. Of all the selection criteria, most law schools place the heaviest emphasis on the score from the LSAT and on a student's Grade Point Average (GPA).

Admission: Students should request applications and information from individual law schools. In addition to application forms, law schools will require letters of recommendation, transcripts (a record of all academic courses taken with the grade received for each; must be prepared by a university official) for all undergraduate and postgraduate study, a statement of purpose and, occasionally, an interview.

Most law schools require applicants to apply through the **Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS)**. This service compiles the required application information into a single report that is then sent to each law school applied to by the student. This report includes an undergraduate academic summary, copies of all undergraduate, graduate and professional school records, LSAT scores, letters of reference and writing samples taken from the LSAT. Application forms should be sent directly to the law schools, who will then request the report from the LSDAS. Registration with the LSDAS should take place by the end of the penultimate year of study and can be done when registering for the LSAT. Details of the LSDAS service can be found in the LSAT registration bulletin and on the LSAT web site (www.lsac.org).

Expenses

The cost of applying to each law school can range between \$25 and \$100. Additionally, the cost of sitting the LSAT exam is \$90, and the cost of registration with the LSDAS service is \$95.

Tuition for law school can range from \$5,000 up to \$25,000 per academic year. Approximately two-thirds of ABA-approved law schools charge between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per year. These figures do not include living expenses. For the academic year 1999/2000, the ABA states that the *average* living cost was \$8,647 for those residing on campus and \$12,054 for those living off campus.

Many US law schools offer financial assistance in various forms, including federal aid and loans (for US nationals only), fellowships, scholarships and assistantships. Other sources of financial assistance can be found in funding directories such as *Funding for United States Study* and *The Grants Register*, which provide comprehensive lists of awards from independent foundations that may include law as an eligible field of study.

The fee to sit the bar generally ranges between \$150 and \$400, but can be as high as \$700. A bar review course prior to the bar exam is strongly recommended for all bar exam candidates. Most review courses are run by outside agencies, are about four weeks long and can cost up to \$3,000.

Qualifying to Practice Law in the US

In order to practice law, one must first be "admitted to the bar" in an individual state. This entails passing the state bar exam and any other exams required by the state bar examiners. For students with a JD degree from a US law school, most states will not grant permission to sit the exam unless the law school has been approved by the ABA.

Generally, state bar examiners require evidence of three qualities in exam candidates: sufficient general education at the undergraduate level; sufficient

US legal education gained from an ABA-approved law school; and sufficient knowledge of local bar requirements. Each state bar administration sets its own criteria for permission to sit the state bar exam so prospective candidates must contact the individual state bar examiners for specific information.

Please note that neither having a JD degree nor passing a state bar exam gives you the right to work in the US. (When applying for a student visa, a student must show that s/he intends to return to his/her home country after finishing the degree.)

Additional Resources

The DAI Library contains several directories concerning law education in the US (listed below); catalogues from US universities, test preparation guides for reference use; and application forms for the LSAT and TOEFL examinations.

Specific resources for law education available in the DAI Library are as follows:

- *Law Schools: A Comprehensive Guide to 181 Accredited U.S. Law Schools*. Princeton: Peterson's.
- *Barron's Guide to Law Schools*. NY-Barron's Educational Series
- *Law Info*: Peterson's Interactive 2000 Edition. New Jersey: Peterson's (CD-Rom).

Other On-Line Resources

- American Bar Association: www.abanet.org
- Association of American Law Schools: www.aals.org
- Law School Admissions Council: www.lsac.org
- National Conference of Bar Examiners: www.ncbex.org

Adapted from "Legal Education in the US", US Educational Advisory Service, London. <<http://www.fulbright.co.uk/eas/studyus/subjects/law.html>>.

MEDICAL STUDY IN THE US

Applying to US Medical Schools

In the US medicine is taught only at the **graduate** level after an undergraduate university education. Medical education in the US is generally four years of medical school, followed by three to seven years of residency training. Upon successful completion of the four-year medical school curriculum and exams, the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree is conferred.

Acceptance Rates at US Medical Schools: Admission to US medical schools is extremely competitive. Many US medical schools, especially at state-supported institutions, will not consider international students for admission to MD programs. The representation of foreign students in US medical schools stands at less than 1% of all students. US medical schools have a primary obligation to train US citizens and are strict about accepting international students into the first year class.

Expenses and Financial Aid: Average annual cost of tuition and fees for first year medical students is approximately \$11,000 for state residents and \$25,000 for international students at a state-funded medical school, and \$30,000 at a private school. In addition, the cost of living for one academic year (nine months) ranges from \$8,000-\$15,000 depending on location in the US. Few scholarships are announced for international students to pursue medical education, and loans are generally not available from US lending institutions without a US citizen as a co-borrower. However, individuals with permanent residency in the US may be eligible for federal student loan programs. It usually takes a permanent resident one year as a non-student to establish residency in a state. State residency will allow you to pay in-state tuition fees, which are lower than both out-of-state and private university fees.

The Structure of an MD Program

The MD degree is usually completed in four years. In general, during the first two years you will study basic medical sciences: anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, microbiology, pathology and pharmacology, as well as behavioral sciences, introductory patient interviewing and examination techniques along with an introduction to health care. In the third year, you will gain experience with patients in hospital, clinic and office settings in the fields of internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, surgery and psychiatry. The fourth year is a mix of required and elective courses where you

will gain additional experience and expertise in caring for patients. Towards the end of medical school, you will choose a specialty in which you will spend at least three years in a residency after completing the MD program. During that period you may obtain a license to practice.

Admission to the MD Program

How to Apply: There are currently two ways to apply to US medical schools. If a medical school is a member of the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) then you must apply through AMCAS. If a school is not a member of AMCAS then you will need to apply directly to the school.

American Medical College Admission Service (AMCAS): AMCAS (www.aamc.org) is a centralized processing service for medical school applications. Most US medical schools are participants in AMCAS and do not accept applicants not participating in AMCAS. US medical schools may use AMCAS for preliminary screening and outstanding applicants would be asked to fill out a further medical school-specific application.

The admissions committees of US medical schools where you apply will consider the following factors:

- Undergraduate coursework and Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Any post-baccalaureate pre-medical education
- Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) scores

Other factors of consideration may include your personal statement, letters of recommendation, exposure to medical field and community service, interview with an admissions officer and extracurricular activities.

Obtaining a License to Practice Medicine

There is no national medical licensing authority in the US. The license to practice medicine in the US is granted by the individual medical licensing authorities in each of the 50 states, commonly known as the "state medical boards." Each board sets its own rules and regulations and individuals wishing to practice medicine in the US are advised to contact the state in which they plan to work for complete information.

The United States Medical Licensure Examination (USMLE): The United States Medical Licensure Examination (www.usmle.org) is a common method of evaluation for medical licensure established by the Federation of State Medical Boards (www.fsmb.org) and the National Board of Medical Examiners (www.nbme.org) It is a single exam comprised of three steps that assess a doctor's ability to apply knowledge that is important in medicine and that constitutes the basis of safe and effective patient care. Step 1 assesses biomedical knowledge, Step 2 assesses clinical science knowledge and Step 3 assesses the ability to apply medical knowledge and understanding of

biomedical and clinical science considered necessary for the unsupervised practice of medicine.

Licensure for Foreign Medical Graduates: Your first step is to contact the state board of medicine for the state in which you plan to practice. Most states require Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certification of foreign medical graduates as a pre-requisite to obtaining a license to conduct supervised medical practice in that state. To conduct unsupervised medical practice, you must also complete Step 3 of the USMLE. If you are a doctor wishing to go to the US for research that does not involve patient care, you are **not** required to pass the USMLE.

Medical Residencies/Fellowships for Foreign Medical Graduates

After completing the MD degree, it is standard for doctors to undertake a period of residency training, usually in a hospital, specializing in one area of medicine. The length of residency training varies among the different specialties but is usually between three and seven years. Foreign medical graduates must hold a valid standard ECFMG Certificate in order to enter residency programs accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (www.acgme.org).

Obtaining a Residency or Fellowship Position: At least 12 months before you wish to start a residency program, consult *The Graduate Medical Education Directory* (the "Green Book") published annually by the American Medical Association (AMA) and/or the "FREIDA" (Fellowship and Electronic Residency Database) database, on the AMA website (www.ama-assn.org) to choose an appropriate program.

National Residency Match Program (NRMP): In addition to applying directly to hospital residency programs, you may also need to register for the NRMP (www.nrmp.org). About 80% of the hospital residency programs participate in the NRMP and will not accept applications from candidates not in the NRMP. The NRMP is not a centralized application service; it serves as a mechanism for the matching of applicants to programs in order of preference of both parties. However, applicants from foreign medical schools have to apply as independent applicants.

Visas for Residencies or Training

J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa: This is the visa most commonly used by foreign medical graduates to undertake postgraduate medical education.

Temporary Worker H-1B: This visa is for temporary workers in specialty occupations who hold professional level qualifications appropriate to the employment in which they will be engaged.

Persons of Extraordinary Ability O-1: This visa, as applied to medicine, is usually for someone who has established an exceptional reputation in a particular field based on research or development of specialized techniques for patient care.

Medical Student Electives

Many medical schools worldwide now offer opportunities for students to pursue such activities as independent study, honors programs and special research projects, at home or abroad. Students wishing to obtain a position in the US for their short-term elective period are not required to take the USMLE as long as the position does not involve direct patient contact.

Additional Resources

The DAI Library contains several directories concerning medical education in the US, catalogues for US universities and medical schools, test preparation guides for reference use, application forms for the MCAT and USMLE.

Specific resources for medical education available in the DAI Library:

- *U.S and Canadian Medical Schools: A Comprehensive Guide to All 159 Accredited Medical Schools.* Princeton: Peterson's.
- *Graduate Programs in the Health Professions.*
- *Graduate Medical Education Directory.* American Medical Associations.

On-Line Resources

- Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC): www.aamc.org
- Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG): www.ecfm.org
- Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB): www.fsmb.org
- National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME): www.nbme.org
- Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education: www.acgme.org
- American Medical Association: www.ama-assn.org

Adapted from "Medical Education in the US", US Educational Advisory Service, London. <<http://www.fulbright.co.uk/eas/studyus/subjects/medicine.html>>.